

METANOIA,

A PLEA FOR THE INSANE.

BY

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Οὐ γὰρ ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ Θεὸς πνεῦμα δειλίας, ἀλλὰ δυνάμεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ σωφρονισμοῦ.

For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and love and a *sound* mind.
—2 TIM. i. 7.



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- "Der Verfasser bemerkt dass er Schwindsucht und Scrofel, ihren ganzen Wesen nach, für eine Krankheit halte, so dass er jene innere, diese äussere Tuberkel nennt." Preface to the German translation, by Dr. E. Hoffman, of Dr. M'Cormac's Work, *Natur, Behandlung, und Verhütung der Lungenschwindsucht*, Erlangen, 1858.
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METANOIA.

THE soul is beset, or liable to be beset, by influences which raise or depress while they occupy it, from the highest to the lowest level, from perfect sanity of heart and understanding, to perfect insanity, and from perfect purity and goodness and truth, to utterest impurity and untruthfulness. The souls of the insane, however deranged, perverted, destroyed, are governed by the same laws as the souls of the sane. If we do not understand the psychology of health, never shall we comprehend the psychology of disease. For there is no exact line of severment between the sane and the insane. There are, perhaps, as many mutations in insane as in sane life. Yet, the insane man is not always entirely insane, and perhaps the sane man is not always entirely sane. Insanity is not the mystical incomprehensible state which some imagine. It is the preponderance, in amount and degree, of insanity over sanity that constitutes disease.

The insane man perceives, but his Perceptions are distorted, imperfect, confused. His Attention also, his Association of ideas, are similarly characterised by disorder and decay, yet are they demonstrative of eternal laws, divine realities, subsistent in every breast. As in dreaming, somnambulism, delirium, though reason's rule have ceased, the laws of the Association of Ideas, otherwise the Succession of Thought or Suggestion, still prove operative, but all strict control is at an end.

Corporeal disease, nerve deficiency, may lead to insanity, is often associated with insanity, oftener still with idiotcy, but corporeal disease is not insanity. It is not true that a change in the material organism is necessarily involved

in the morbid states of thought which we term insanity, and simply, because thought is not the product of organisation. Disordered sensation, the extravagance of emotion and of appetite, hallucination also, which is a form of disordered nerve-function, may lead to insanity. But, as in the noted cases of Pascal, Nicolai, and very many besides, hallucination may subsist with otherwise perfect health. The Brain, neither the white part nor the gray, is not mind, does not discharge any one mental function, is of no intellectual capacity or potentiality whatever. So far as mind is concerned, the brain is simply a large Ganglion, and as associated with the spinal marrow and nerves generally, a congeries of organs for the generation and propagation of Nerve-force, vehicle of impressions from the Sense-organs, and of conveying to those organs the soul's volitions. Otherwise it were just as reasonable to ascribe consciousness to brain-fibre, as to ascribe it to a turnip or a stone.

We may assume, if we like, that life precedes consciousness. Doubtless, however, the mental, plus the bodily consciousness, is generated together. Outward objects, as we know them, and irrespective of the outward factor, which, the soul's receptivity being assumed, generates them, are but forms of the soul's consciousness. There is a concrete *Ego*. The extended living frame, indeed all nature, as we know it, subsists in consciousness. But the living frame, from its ceaseless contiguity, differs thus from other outward objects, is continually present as an objective consciousness. A subjective consciousness indeed ends in self, whereas the objective consciousness assumes an outward factor conterminous with, and inclusive of, the sentient nerves. Whosoever does not admit this, does not admit the first elements, the A B C of psychology. The soul-mind then, and the body-mind, so to speak, as respects the plane of consciousness, are one. But the different states of the Object-mind precede and give rise, in the first instance, to the different states of the Subject-mind, which then gains the capacity of continuing and propagating itself, in consciousness, for ever.

Thus, then, there is, there can be, no conscious existence or subsistence, sane or insane, out of the plane of

the conscious mind itself, and, consequently, the notion that Insanity is merely a cerebral disease, a disorder of the delicate vesicular neurine, or nerve-substance, is only fit for that limbo to which Milton consigns things shapeless, fantastic, and unreal. The whole hypothesis is at issue with the deliverances of consciousness, only source and fountain of truth. Now, the entire foundation of character, of all individuality, in the sane as in the insane, is Fixity of Impression. It is God's law as stamped on nature and the soul of man, and is alike true whether it regard sensation, emotion, or thought. Without fixity, one man would not differ from another man, nay, would not be himself from one interval of time to another. Fixity of impression, in its degree, is a thing so important, so all-essential, that nature, by which I mean the provident working of God, has employed every desirable, and indeed possible, means to realize it. Without fixity, there could be no education, no training, because there would be no real, at least no lasting receptivity. There would be no science, no art, nor any genius or skill. So, thus, congruous with the Laws of Consciousness, it is fixity of impression, the appliances being conformable, that characterises, indeed creates, sanity in the sane, and in the insane insanity.

The antithesis of fixity of impression is Mutability of Impression. Without mutability, in its degree, fixity would be useless. Without fixity, mutability would be useless, similarly. There must be a healthy fixity, a healthy mutability, neither in excess, neither unduly deficient. There may indeed be an insane mutability as well as an insane fixity, a sane fixity, a sane mutability. The healthy soul includes both healthily.

It must not be supposed that all insane persons become insane in the sense of lapsing from sanity into insanity. There is such a thing as an Insane Development, being insane, because in strictness there never was perfect sanity. The paucity, the sparseness of intelligence which multitudes of insane persons display, idiocy in all its grades, weak-mindedness in all its grades, inclusive, can be explained on no other principle. For intellectual and moral ruin springs oftener from intellectual and moral torpor

than intellectual stimulus, neglect and perversion of, as well as opposition to, the laws, the divine laws of mind. The English fields and plains yield mental Cretins perhaps as frequently as the mountain-chasms and recesses. The crowded haunts of men show fewer lunatics, comparatively, than the isolated hamlet and farmstead. Thus, in twelve agricultural English counties, the insane were to the sane as one to eight hundred and twenty, whereas, in the same number of non-agricultural counties, it was as one to twelve hundred. A proportion precisely similar was found to subsist as regards idiots. Otherwise, in the agricultural districts, the idiots were to the lunatics as seven to five. Where the faculties roused are few in number, and spiritual intuition is bounded, the intellect itself is limited. The general faculties are poorly, and not only poorly, but often insanely exercised. Of the many varieties of insanity, and insanity is indeed various, this of undeveloped, ill-developed intelligence, is perhaps the most difficult to deal with.

For the most part, Insanity is of slow growth. The mind is loath to abandon the law of continuity, of a healthy filiation of thought. Many insane persons remain long years unchanged, they do not become better, neither do they grow worse. On the other hand, whilst some regain their normal intelligence, many lapse into utter imbecility. If serious bodily disorder, if Paralysis, local or general, if Epilepsy co-exist, the tendency, other things being equal, is evil. I do not find a lighting-up or restoration of the intelligence before death. In fact, I do not remember an instance of it among all the insane persons whom I have seen dying or about to die. They die in general as they have lived, insane.

Idiotcy or Dementia subsists from birth, or it may supervene. In the former case, the Nerve-structure, though deficient, may be otherwise healthy. When there is deficiency in the nerve-apparatus, the great Ganglion which we term the Brain, the functions dependent on this apparatus will be deficient, the organs of relation will be at fault. But this Nerve-Deficiency may ensue later in life, owing to cerebral structural disease. It may arise also from sudden and violent shocks, at any period, fright, terror,

surprise. At other times the faculties languish, vegetate, become prostrate and decay, concurrently with general prostration and decay, but apart from any appreciable nervous organic structural change.

Delirium differs from Insanity in that it has a corporeal origin, as witnessed in febrile disorders, during inflammation, the accidents of parturition, in hysteria, and as owing to loss of blood. In the crises of excessive excitement, violent passion, epidemics of fanaticism deranging body and soul, the mental functions are perturbed to such a degree that insanity itself is a not infrequent result. If indeed anything could abate fanaticism, itself a moral malady, it would be the spectacle of the insanity brought on by erroneous religious impressions, the madness of despair. In the delirium induced by strong drink in toxic doses, the abuse of narcotics, the nerves both at the centre and the periphery are subject to false impressions, leading often to utter insanity. Irregular Nerve-Action, irregular Reflex-Action, occasionally inducing both delirium and madness, may be seen in Somnambulism, Ecstasy, the states induced by what in America is named Spiritualism. Insanity from terror, bereavement, shocks of surprise, may, and does, ensue without appreciable structural change, and irrespective of instances of ordinary chronic insanity, contradicts and sets aside, utterly, the notion of the exclusively corporeal origin of psychical derangement.

If, then, we discard this error as to the origin of insanity, we must, as a corollary, dismiss likewise the equally erroneous doctrine of Hereditary Insanity. But the condition of brain, of nerve-fibre, productive, as alleged, of insanity, it will be said, is hereditary. Yes, but thought is not a nerve-function, does not depend on phosphorus, as modern empirics have it, is not of molecular origin, whether in the sane or the insane. Consequently, insanity is not thus, cannot be, hereditary. It would be strange, indeed, if insane people had not sometimes insane offspring, since we find it so even with the sane. Doubtless, in such cases, the mischievous influences of imitation and example, of a moral infection, so to speak, not counteracted, and of neglect, will do their work, but then, this is not the here-

ditary influence contended for. I do not mean to say that impairment of nerve-structure may not be hereditary, or in one sense propagable, as numberless instances of congenital idiocy unhappily prove. But the deficiency of nerve-action and resultant mental weakness, which arise from deficient nerve-structure, is quite a distinct thing from the mental derangement which may and does ensue without any appreciable cerebral deficiency, structural or functional, whatever. For the nerve-structures discharge the functions of Organs of Relation and Innervation, have nothing to do with thought, which is not a nerve-function at all. The doctrine of hereditary insanity then, is a mischievous error, fraught, like all the other fruits of our ignorance and misconception, with evil and bale.

The Mortality during insanity varies, but is at all times considerable. For the health suffers from detention, cells ill-ventilated, mental strife, constraint, coupled with the ills incident to our common humanity. The insane rally but indifferently from attacks of disease whether chronic or acute. Little coöperation too often is to be expected from them, even in respect of the best-concerted measures for their relief. If we assume the total number of idiots, lunatics, and demented persons in Britain, Ireland, and their dependencies as fifty thousand, and if we further assume the mortality as ten per cent. per annum, we find that the accession of insane persons needful to maintain this amount is about five thousand every year. Such are the disastrous, such the costly results, not indeed of hereditary influences or organic disease, so much as of defective training, imperfect self-restraint, utter neglect, in fine, a total disregard of the Laws of Mind.

Everything connected with a Healthy Will, and very especially the faculties of Perception and sustained Attention, are excessively debilitated in the insane. This necessarily follows from the weakening and impairment of the faculty of Self-Control, the power of mastering the mind, so all-essential to the exercise of healthy thought. The Power of Attention differs in the insane, as it differs in the sanely-minded themselves, but it is lessened in all. Few things indeed are more remarkable in contemplating the

insane, than the passivity and listlessness which they manifest under circumstances that arrest the immediate heed of persons in sane life.

Insanity, unless when early removed, tends to chronicity, may subsist for years. And yet, even when removed, it may and often does recur. Anything that turns the Attention, that invites to wholesome instead of unwholesome thought, to Control instead of want of control, to sound instead of morbid Will, is of service. And thus it is, other circumstances proving favourable, that the prospect of recovery is so much greater among strangers than friends, abroad than at home. Persons otherwise quite insane, indeed, on being visited by friends or strangers, not in daily communication with them, will often place such constraint upon themselves as to seem, and perhaps for the time to be, almost sane. Nature herself makes efforts for the restoration of the insane. Lucid intervals, so named, are no other. For Sanity indeed is more natural than Insanity, a sound rather than a diseased will. The will in effect is the man, and if we can but healthily control it, we have the "open Sesame" which haply is to conduct us into the treasure-house of reason itself, and convert a lucid interval into a permanent state. If the return from Insanity to Sanity, as I firmly believe and maintain, be realised by the Culture of the Will, by Obedience to the Laws of Mind, it sets aside as irreconcilable with fact and with truth, the doctrine that the one and only genetic source of insanity is organic, structural, cerebral change.

There is one thing, as it seems to me, to lie at the root of the whole question of insanity, the Pathogenesis and Treatment alike, I mean the Manner of the Consciousness in the insane. This is a matter of vastly greater moment than are any considerations relative to real or fancied mutations in what some are pleased to term the vesicular neurine of the brain, the plus or the minus, real or fancied, of nerve-phosphorus. *Ohne Phosphor kein Gedanke*, exclaims the German materialist. Insanity is disease of the brain-structure, repeats his English fellow. It is not so. Phosphorus in sufficient abundance and a sound molecular structure are needful and desirable. But then,

brain-soundness and mind-soundness are not one thing, but different things. The brain may be diseased and its structure impaired, without mind-unsoundness. The brain may be most healthy, yet the faculties, as regards this terrene life, fled for ever. No, the evil lies in quite other than empirical considerations, resides in the mind's Unconsciousness of its Consciousness, in a word the soul's unawareness of its own acts. If, in the sane, the mind's processes be not objects of attention or possible attention, unless by a special effort, how much more then is it so in the insane, in whom the faculty of interior observation is absent or greatly deficient. For in insanity the mind is not conscious of its consciousness. And herein lies the grand distinction between man and the inferior animals, between sleeping man and waking man, in short, between man as insane and man as Conscious of Self. I do not say that the insane are unconscious, but that they are *not* conscious of their consciousness, that they do not think on what they are thinking. If they did, and did so healthily, they would cease to be insane. The question of questions then in reference to insanity, and in respect of the impairment of the principle of volition, lies here. I do not assert that the man who does not reflect on the objects of his consciousness is insane, but I would assert that the man in insanity does not, indeed so long as he is insane could not do so, and that here lies the point of his disease. The *γνώσι σεαυτόν* of the wise ancients, I am persuaded, refers to this also, and not to the moral consciousness only. In short, the insane man does not know himself, and therefore is he insane.

All science, psychological science with the rest, consists in a series of approximations to truth. And science never jars with science. There is, then, no quarrel between Psychology and Physiology, rightly understood. Each is admirable in its own place. Nay, the phenomena which come within the province of each, throw light upon each other, conversely and conversely. But when physiology alone attempts to explain matters which lie within the exclusive domain of psychology, and conversely, what can ensue but error and misconstruction. The questions of Criminality and Responsibility, in insanity, hitherto so obscure,

are easily enough resolved, on paper at least, so long as we are careful to keep physiology and psychology in their proper places. If the criminal be conscious of his consciousness, if he be able to reason, combine, in a word, to survey the operations of his inner self, unquestionably he is not insane. But the criminal lunatic, unconscious of his consciousness, and but partially conscious of his acts, is irresponsible because insane. Here, however, there are degrees, for self-consciousness and reason ebb and flow, so that a man may be comparatively sane and therefore responsible at one time, comparatively insane, and therefore irresponsible at another.

Of a surety, the bodily health must be seen to in insanity, phosphorus must be furnished but in copious food supplies, disordered cerebral action, when it subsists, must be set right. Yet even here, Moral Treatment is the one essential thing. If disease, indeed, be urgent, if the nerve-structure be lesed, and its function seriously impaired, the man must die. Yet, short of this, the potentiality of Recuperation, of Self-Integration, if I may coin an expression, never wholly intermits, and *moral influences* come ceaselessly into play. SUBSTITUTION is the great agent for reclaiming the insane. This going out of self, is the moral lever, the mighty engine which is to raise the ruined soul, supplying such allurements as lie within our reach, till at length the principles of Self-Assertion and of a wholesome Autonomy being roused, the soul, its nobler powers awakened, gazing face to face on Self, is rescued again. Yes, the fixed idea, the revolving circlet of insanity must be rooted out, not by force or stress of argument, but through a species of gentle yet resistless constraint, until, the work being consummated, the soul become conscious of its better self. Spiritual Health, that is what is needed, that is what we must substitute for folly, disease, and when it subsists, crime. For God has imparted to every man, being cultivated, the divine power of Introspection, the faculty of being, doing, thinking well, in a word, of remaining sane. There must indeed be a surcease of all raving, random, circular thought. The soul, making ever fresh starts, new points of departure in consciousness, must be led to higher perceptions, a more purposeful exercise of

thought, and man through the providence of man made whole. For insane associations propagate themselves, and therefore must sane associations, at whatever cost of toil and pains, be made to replace them. Use must take the room of disuse, in respect of every faculty. The moral decay that neglect and want of care have entailed, must give way to better types of thought and feeling. The Will must be disciplined, leading the soul from the abyss of unreason, carrying it into the region of reason, the free heaven of God's light and life and love, until perfect freedom, the freedom that consists in discharging the divine purpose, reign within. For each successful effort, awakening strength through Conscience and the Power of Will, lends fresh power, self-government breeds self-government, and glorious reason, celestial ray, is redeemed at last.

In nothing are the humaner tendencies of the age more conspicuous than in the general treatment of the insane. Establishments, conductors, as contrasted with former days, vie with each other in avoiding undue restraint, realising cheerfulness, the solace of moral, the mitigation of physical suffering. It must be conceded, however, that the treatment is still too passive, that enough is not yet done to remedy psychical disease. Habitual skill, a practised humanity, carefully adjusted to individual requirements, will always more or less directly realise their aim, but the best treatment must repose on just views as to the nature of disease. No, insanity does not reside in the absence of phosphorus, the alteration of cerebral tissue, but in the aggravation to extremity of the inanities, follies, crazes, and shortcomings of daily life. If a preconceived and most erroneous hypothesis did not blind the judgment, it would be admitted that lunatics might at any time be seen in the enjoyment of perfect bodily health, and without the slightest evidence of nervous derangement or cerebral disease. The most successful, and therefore most rational treatment of lunacy, must involve right views as to its nature and origin. To look upon the malady as material only, is to fly in the face of observation, all just induction and analysis. As the causes of insanity are Moral Causes mainly, so must the treatment, the insanity regarded, be a Moral Treatment mainly. I would rather

see insanity morally treated by a practical, experienced, intelligent, non-medical person, than by a medical man entertaining, and only influenced by, materialistic views. The treatment of lunacy apart from psychology, is simply quackery. We cannot deal with the insane unless we sympathise with them and understand them. For insanity is a moral disorder, acknowledges moral influences, the needfulness of culture and discipline of the will, in fine, a judicious alternation of remedial moral, and physical means. What possible weight, indeed, could an efficiently-organized moral treatment have in the eyes of one with whom psychical derangement is a mere question of plus or minus phosphorus, and mind itself but motion in the molecules of the brain.

The great intelligence and humanity of very many who have to do with the treatment considered, I do not think that those who undertake the difficult task of dealing with the insane are afforded sufficient scope. The comparative fewness of recoveries in acute cases, the yet more lamentable deficiency in chronic, is owing in part to the paucity of remedial means at the disposal of those who have the charge. Hence, too often, the passive, inert, and pining state to which so many of the insane are almost necessarily relegated, and in which they therefore spend and end their days. For every means should be yielded calculated to remedy psychical derangement, in short, to reform and integrate, when disordered, the nobler machinery of the soul. More attractive bodily occupation there should be for one thing, at one time beneath the free heaven, at another in some cheerful, roomy, well-ventilated space indoors. It requires the greatest seriousness, the entirest directness, in dealing with the insane. A higher class of persons, better educated, better remunerated, should be entrusted with the immediate culture, so to speak, of the insane. Such would prove susceptible of a far more elevated order of motives than the common herd of keepers and keeperesses, and would correspondingly bring these motives into comparatively influential operation. Indeed, the insane should be held to constant wholesome cheering EMPLOYMENT of body and soul as free from violence and physical constraint. They must be set to work at some

healthy material moral occupation, that they may be cured. For it is difficult to imagine the extreme torpor of mind and body into which so many of the insane are plunged. Yet, even they, for the most part, might be reached through the medium of their animal wants, various food and clothing and action, some lingering harmless addiction which it would be the business of the skilled attendant to discover. To Music's gentle solace very many are accessible, and why not, since the musical faculty itself is not insane. When we come to the higher motives furnished by Religion, Science, Letters, Art, we find that many are immediately susceptible, and others prospectively so. For they all help to turn attention from the mental craze, aid our attempts at individual development, the furtherance of sequential effort, the control of appetite, and the exercise of healthy will. Idleness, Inoccupation, and Gloom, are indeed the bane of asylums, where Moral Culture, with a wholesome habitual cheerfulness, should come more fully into play. And since the Affections and Feelings are not necessarily depraved, not even insane, there is in them a perfect mine of moral influence for thoughtful loving intelligence to turn to account when it will. For let us but reflect, that of the Mind in itself we know nothing, know it only in its operations, which in the insane are at fault. It is our business, then, to remedy impaired morbid thought, to bring it under the moral law, in short, to avert mental ruin, and rehabilitate into healthy life and action the weakened Consciousness of man.

If insanity can be removed, if in idiocy, even, in which the organs of relation are so deficient, for here is the entire disease, the mind can be raised to relative intelligence, elevation, and self-guidance, with what vastly greater certainty might the rule of lawful habit be developed, and both these deplorable degradations of humanity be averted. It were a noble problem for the legislator, the moralist, the physician, and the divine, to stay altogether these dreary efflorescences of our partial civilisation, our selfishness, our untruthfulness, our false refinement, our imperfectly cultivated reasoning powers, our unsound thought and feeling, our neglected youth, our excesses. The realisation of a superior social status, of proper thought, of good habits *ab initio*, would go

far to check the ravages of idiocy and insanity for ever. For God has imparted to man the mighty power of Self-conservancy, the maintenance of a whole soul. To him has that great Being confided the gift of Self-Control, with obedience to the laws of consciousness and of conscience, and through Discipline of guarding against insanity and idiocy, of realising success and wit, and purpose and strength of healthy will. For few, if any, grow instantly insane. There is many a rally ere the shattered faculties become clouded, impaired, lost. The will, indeed, the law of self-conservatism, does not all at once forswear its dominancy, but having lost the mastery, that mastery is restored with difficulty. For if reason vacate its seat, if a healthy give way to an unhealthy emotional life, how is folly to regain it. Indeed, if we take into account the so frequent weakness and inanity of daily life, we shall only feel surprise that the vacillating will does not yet oftener forsake its throne. Were the great principle of Self-Control incultivable, insanity could not be prevented, neither could it be removed. A different procedure, nay, in certain essentials, one entirely different, should be adopted. The patient must be induced to abandon his hitherto too listless, passive, hopeless attitude, and by every practicable, intelligent, considerate means, led to take an active, ceaseless, living interest in his own recovery. He should, so far as is possible, be brought to see and feel that the period of his isolation depends entirely on himself. All deception, all avoidable coercion, is to be abandoned. In fine, filling up the mighty interval, the man in *posse* must replace the man in *esse*, and a hopeful genuine vital existence, God's greatest gift since it includes all others, made to irradiate and fill the soul. For the key to the successful treatment of insanity and of all tendency thereto, is the substitution of sound for unsound thought, a healthy for an unhealthy emotional life, the resurrection of the moral consciousness, in fine, the God-like faculty of Self-Control. Nature rears every being new and true. Each man, wherever and in whatever condition he may be born, is susceptible of all the culture of his kind. Whatever he may be in *esse*, he is capable of every thing in *posse*. And as any one may become insane by violating, so may any one remain sane by habitual observance of, the laws of mind. Every lapse of Self-Discipline, of Self-Culture,

lessens by so much the practicability, impairs by so much the faculty of culture itself. All true work, all true progress, must begin within. If, indeed, we forego the exercise of our powers, if we forfeit the Autonomy with which Heaven has endowed us, the more enfeebled do those powers become, the less fitted for that spontaneity of thought which is at the bottom of all healthy moral life and effort. Lapse breeds lapse, and failure failure, until at length we prove incapable of self-guidance and come entirely to depend on the providence of our fellows. The insane man sinks into childishness, or a condition approximate, and like the child needs firm and succouring care. Mental imbecility, physical disorder itself, own no other source than Nature's violated Laws. For if the Body is to be esteemed and guarded as a temple divine, how much more the Soul, the living, loving, striving, working soul, made in the Divine Likeness. God requires of us the fulfilment of his purposes, the realisation of every Obligation, the Culture of the Understanding, the Discipline of the Heart, in short, the carrying-out of the Compact which he entered into with us at our birth. For God is indeed the centre of health and peace and power and love and soundness of mind. He has gifted us with two worlds, one material the other immaterial, one somatic the other psychical, for our heritage. These worlds has he given us, worlds subjected to unerring law, that we should cultivate and make use of them, and through our conduct beautify them, with indeed the dread alternative, in the event of failure, of being stricken with incapacity, and unable to comply with his divinest will.